



Ethics

Module XI

What you will learn in this module

- Ethical behavior and conduct expected of a conservation district supervisor
- Oath of Office requirements
- Fiduciary obligation
- Unethical behavior

Ethics and Accountability

- The conservation district board is ultimately responsible for ensuring adherence to legal standards and ethical norms.
- As public officials, conservation district supervisors must faithfully perform their duties in the best interest of the conservation district and for the benefit of the people.

Oath of Office

- All conservation district supervisors, as officers elected or appointed under Kansas law, are required to take and subscribe an oath, in which they swear to support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of Kansas, and faithfully discharge the duties of a conservation district supervisor.

Oath of Office (cont.)

Pursuant to K.S.A. 54-106 et seq. "All officers elected or appointed under any law of the state of Kansas shall, before entering upon the duties of their respective offices, take and subscribe an oath or affirmation, as follows:

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support the constitution of the United States and the constitution of the state of Kansas, and faithfully discharge the duties of a County Conservation District supervisor. So help me God.

Fiduciary Responsibility

- A fiduciary does not put personal gain above duties to the district.
- A fiduciary is expected to uphold good faith, loyalty and trust.
- A fiduciary duty is a legal relationship between two or more parties.
- District board members have a fiduciary obligation to the district.
- A fiduciary is a person to whom property or power is entrusted for the benefit of another.

Conduct

- Supervisors are expected:
 - To perform their duties in a professional manner.
 - To ensure fair and equitable program delivery to all .
 - To actively participate in the management of the district.
 - To avoid conflicts of interest.

Unethical Behavior

Any activity that violates the public trust is unethical behavior such as:

- Using the conservation district or any part of the organization for personal advantage or the personal advantage of friends and relatives, including information obtained, unless the information is available to the public.
- Improperly influencing or attempting to influence other officials to act in own benefit.

Unethical Behavior (cont.)

- Giving preferential treatment to any person.
- Accepting anything of value from any source which is offered to influence my actions as a public official.
- Discussing the confidential proceedings of the board outside the board meeting.

Review Question

1. Only elected conservation district supervisors are required to take an oath of office.

True or False?

Review Answer

1. Only elected conservation district supervisors are required to take an oath of office.

False – Elected and appointed supervisors.

Review Question

2. A fiduciary duty is an important but not legal relationship between two or more parties.

True or False?

Review Answer

2. A fiduciary duty is an important but not legal relationship between two or more parties.

False

Review Question

3. It is acceptable to take a gift offered to influence my actions as a public official as long as the value does not exceed \$40.

True or False?

Review Answer

3. It is acceptable to take a gift offered to influence my actions as a public official as long as the value does not exceed \$40.

False

Summary

- Strengthening ethics and accountability should be an ongoing commitment by boards. Individual and collective adherence to high ethical standards by public officials is central to the maintenance of public trust and confidence in government.

Resources Available

- Resources
 - Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission
 - *Conservation District Handbook*
 - *Supervisors Handbook*
- Where to find
 - 109 W. 9th Street, 2A,
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1287,
785.296.3600.
 - District office or DOC website at
www.ksda.gov